



## **Regional Service Council Minutes Region # 3**

**Meeting Date:** August 21, 2006

**Meeting Location:** CAPS, Elkhart, IN

**Council Members Present:** Bill Bruinsma, Executive Director Juvenile Justice Center, Linda Cioch, Regional Manager, Region 3, Michael Carroll, Director Marshall County DCS, Sally Greenlee, Marshall County Family Case Manager, Tony Sommer, Director Elkhart County DCS, Sally Mahnken, CASA Kosciusko County, Peggy Shively, Director Kosciusko County DCS

**Council Members Absent:** The Honorable Peter Nemeth, The Honorable Duane G. Huffer, Magistrate Deborah Domine, The Honorable Michael Cook, Terry Zornig, Supervisor, St. Joseph County DCS, Jim Calwell, Foster Parent

**Others In Attendance:** Charles Smith, Director, St. Joseph County DCS, Jim Burns, Family Focus, Inc., Marie Lindke, Prosecutor's Office, Barbara Vernon, Elkhart County CAPS, Candy Yoder, CAPS, Kelley Todd, Elkhart County Sheriff Department, Michael Miller, Elkhart Police Department, Jim Yoder, Bowen Center, Rodney Barbee, Wernle Children's Home

### **Meeting Minutes**

#### **Meeting Called to Order at 10:00 a.m.**

1. Minutes for the June 2006 meeting were proposed for any changes. There was a motion to accept the June minutes by Tony Sommer and a second by Peggy Shively. The motion was carried.
2. Linda Cioch gave the following updates: Report from the Committee on Community Partners, a list of training web sites and "Making A Difference" RSC update, were given to the Council Members. Linda reported that the budget is in process. Members were all informed that Linda is scheduling luncheon trainings with the county DCS staffs to keep them updated on changes and to continue to build rapport. Linda also shared the definition of custodian, which is a person with whom a child resides. This is now to include overnight caretakers such as grandparents babysitting, with overnight being the key for the custodial title. Linda also clarified

that law enforcement requests will be treated as information and referral reports so that unsubstantiated cases are referred and not screened out. Sexual abuse allegations are an exception as they will always be investigated by DCS. Linda also referenced CAPTA (Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act). In accordance with CAPTA, parents who are subjects of substantiated investigations have the right of due process to appeal within thirty days. Notices will be sent informing parents of the appeal process. The appeal is taken to the County Director for review, who may then decide to take before the Child Protection Team for input. If the County Director approved the investigation decision, the Regional Director also reviews the investigation. Further appeal can be made for an Administrative Law Trail. If CHINS or criminal charges are filed the appeal is put on hold, pending the outcome. There was discussion regarding the perpetrator's right to a copy of the 311 report. Mari Lindke questioned whether or not information such as victim's addresses, could be redacted from the report in order to protect victims. It was also asked if log notes are included and if 311 narratives should be minimal with details given in log notes. Linda Cioch stated that the directive reads "report" but she will check with legal for clarification.

3. In identifying service gaps Tony Sommer indicated that there is a need for home based case management services for unsubstantiated and/or screen out reports. This need was formerly filled by the wrap-around program. Mr. Sommer requested an MOA with Oaklawn to cover the rest of the year. A quorum was present and approval was carried by a vote of eight with no dissention.

The need for a sex abuse program for young perpetrators was also identified. Members expressed concerns about substantiation on young perpetrators regarding child on child incidents. Peggy Shively stated that she finds a lack of consistent consensus among therapist in their opinions on where to draw the perpetrator/victim line. Mari Lindke noted concern that tracking of your perpetrators not be lost. There was input on identifying and tracking serial perpetrators. A method to consider for tracking might be labeling a reported incident as "indicated" and keeping the report for a year, with a second "indicated" report causing the file to remain on file for a second year.

Bill Bruinsma stated that his client population of perpetrators is most often perpetrators with a pattern of recidivism. He informed the Council that 50% of the juvenile residential budget is spent on sexual perpetrators. Sex offenders have overwhelmed the system. Conversation followed addressing Linda Cioch's question, are there any good local programs? Tony Sommer commented that he believes Lincoln Therapeutic and Holy Cross have offered good services. Mike Carroll noted that Bashor was successful with a child from their county exhibiting extremely dysfunctional behaviors. Bill Bruinsma added that Bashor has not shown success with conduct disorder. Mike Carroll added that Resolute has the same problem.

4. In New Business Chuck Smith expressed his concern over the increasing cost of treatment in our region. Mr. Smith pointed out that there seems to be a discrepancy between the cost St. Joseph County pays compared to other counties of comparable size. In fact, comparable and larger counties seem to be paying less than St. Joseph County. He cited as an example of fees, Resolute's sexual perpetrator programs, which is \$310.00 per day and recently made requests for a second year of treatment. Mr. Smith put the question to the Council, "How far do we go?" balancing the responsibility to the taxpayers with what at times seems to be unending residential placement. He said that local politicians are starting to question the allocation of monies due to

short dollars available; political and public backlash would not be unexpected. Mr. Smith called for discussion on standardizing costs and length of residential placements across the counties.

Peggy Shively related to the Council that the community has established standards of reluctance to place children out of their homes in Kosciusko County. Ms. Shively also expressed frustration regarding the lack of information from service providers on how children will successfully transition back into the family home, not just maintain stability in the residential setting. Michael Carroll added that some agencies are not working with the families for the transition home. Tony Sommer spoke of Therapeutic Foster Care as a step down from residential. Chuck Smith challenged the therapeutic label as questionable, calling into consideration the training received from those homes to function in that capacity.

Bill Bruinsma introduced the subject of Utilization Review of Providers to the discussion. Barbara Vernon asked if DCS has Utilization Review. Chuck Smith indicated that reviews were done case by case in St. Joseph County and that he took on the review because of a lack of resources for such. Tony Sommer stated that in Elkhart County effectiveness of treatment is staffed internally. Mr. Smith also noted the specialized training Mr. Bruinsma has, as a psychologist, to do utilization reviews. Mr. Smith asked, should we be using specialized persons to do utilization reviews?

Mr. Bruinsma told the Council that when he staffs individual cases, program times are reduced and recidivism is reduced. Because of the overwhelming numbers of juveniles, Mr. Bruinsma has trained residential probation officers to also do utilization reviews. Rodney Barbee, of Wernle Children's Home shared that his agency welcomes the reviews. He explained that it is useful for them to get the feedback. Mr. Barbee further said that they have worked successfully with Lake County in this manner. Mr. Bruinsma asked the Council to consider discussing with the State the resources for utilization review.

**Meeting Adjourned**